

Sports

Herd goes down with back-to-back losses

pg 10



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HALIFAX • MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009

metronews.ca

Celebrity Buzz



Richie & Madden expand family

pg 14

Cop charged with impaired driving

COURT RCMP officers have charged one of their own with driving while impaired.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 31, South Shore Mounties stopped a driver who seemed impaired. She took a breathalyser test.

Const. Kathy Mansley has been charged with having care and control of a motor vehicle while impaired. She was in court for the first time Friday, and will be in Liverpool provincial court again March 24.

Mansley, a Halifax officer, is currently on paid leave.

METRO HALIFAX

Riding the Recession

Looking for ways to save money and ride out the economic storm? Now through the end of March, Metro will share advice on how to cut down on expenses and navigate your way through the recession.

• Comment

Anne Hines provides Metro readers with an 'Are you ready for the recession?' questionnaire, pg 6

• This week **Health — How to grocery shop on a tighter budget.**

Auto — Some of the top-value cars on the market. Food — Metro's wine columnist introduces budget vintages.



Oscars

Winslet's win



British actress Kate Winslet holds the Oscar for best actress last night at the 81st Academy Awards in California for her work in *The Reader*. More Oscars coverage, pages 11, 12.

Health care use rising: Report

REPORT Nearly half of the whopping \$76-billion increase in national health care spending over the past decade is due to accelerated use of the system by all Canadians, says a new report.

Contrary to popular belief, population growth and aging are not the major causes of increased health care spending, according to Value for Money: Making Canadian Health Care Stronger, a discussion paper released today by the Health Council of Canada.

"The fear that the aging population is what's going to cripple the health-care system doesn't actually seem to be all that well-founded," said Dr. Danielle Martin, chair of the council's Value for Money committee, who authored the report.

"The frail and the elderly don't use health care as much as we think. In fact, what's going on is Canadians across all age groups are using health care more."

Using data compiled by

the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the council found that increases in the use of services, such as surgeries, treatments and prescriptions, account for 48 per cent of the growth in health care spending. Population growth is responsible for a 14 per cent increase in spending, people living longer, about 11 per cent, while inflation is responsible for 27 per cent of spending growth.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Marriott shooting suspicious

Link to feud unknown: Cops

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

A member of the well-known Marriott family, which police have linked to a crime war against another family, was shot to death Friday.

Terry Marriott Jr., 34, was killed at 20 Whitehead Rd. in Harrietsfield. Police were called to the address at 5:15 p.m. and found Marriott already dead.

Five people who were in and around the house were questioned and released without charges.

It was Halifax's third murder of the year.

Police say they do not yet know if the death is linked to what they say is a long-standing feud with the rival Melvin family.

But they did confirm the victim's identity and that the death is being treated as a homicide.

A new blaze of violence was set off in November when Jimmy Melvin Jr. was released from prison after witnesses at his trial recanted on their testimony.

First, Melvin's father, Jimmy Melvin Sr., was shot at outside Jessy's Pizza in Spryfield.

Then Jason Hallett, who police say is a Melvin associate, was shot at outside the IWK hospital; Aaron

Gregory Marriott, 18, was charged with the crime.

In December, Melvin Jr. was shot twice in the upper torso outside a Ridgevalley Road apartment.

The shootings prompted Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley to say the force would take "unprecedented measures" to clamp down on gang violence.

In mid-January, 15 people believed to be connected to an ongoing drug war were charged as the result of a yearlong police operation.

Many of the charges focused on the shootings involving Hallett and Melvin Jr.

Since then, there had been no public incidents involving either family until Friday's shooting.

Members of the Major Crime Unit and Forensic Investigation Section were on the scene throughout the weekend investigating the area and canvassing neighbours.

Anyone with information related to the death is asked to call police at 490-5020 or anonymously with CrimeStoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

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NOVA SCOTIA'S LOWEST RATES!

A portrait of James Robinson Johnston, who in 1900 became the first black lawyer admitted to the Nova Scotia bar, was unveiled Friday at the Law Courts on Lower Water Street. Johnston was the third Canadian-born black lawyer to earn a law degree. **METRO HALIFAX**

Local



Murray tribute moves to tomorrow

You'll have another chance to see Canada's Songbird — A Tribute to Anne Murray for \$10. The Eastern Front Theatre production's Sunday \$10 special was rescheduled to Tuesday night because of a watermain break. Go to ticketpro.ca for tickets.

METRO HALIFAX

Victim not co-operating, police say

INVESTIGATION RCMP are investigating a possible abduction Saturday in Sackville, but say the victim isn't co-operating. At 4:25 a.m., a 44-year-old woman called 9-1-1, asking dispatchers to send a car "right away."

When police got to the Cobequid Road address, no one was at the apartment. The building superintendent let them in, where they found signs of a struggle and no sign of the woman. RCMP found a suspect vehicle at 6:20 a.m. and then found the woman in an apartment at 6:25 a.m. at the same apartment building, but in a different apartment.

Police say she isn't helping with the investigation. No charges have been laid.

METRO HALIFAX

Ignore hoax scare emails: Police

NO THREAT There are no drug-laced business cards being handed around in the Halifax area.

Police say there's an email going around that suggests an overpowering drug contained in some business cards could temporarily incapacitate you if you handle it. It's a hoax. If there's a public safety threat, it won't come from an email forward; check Halifax.ca/police — or newspapers, radio and TV — for legitimate police warnings.

METRO HALIFAX

metronews.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Bathurst, N.B. basketball team takes provincial title a year after tragic van crash at metronews.ca/canada
Video Bill Clinton talks to CNN's Larry King about the stimulus bill, and BlackBerrys at metronews.ca/world

Lotteries

Friday, Feb. 20

Lotto Super 7: 12, 15, 18, 31, 33, 40 & 42. Bonus 1.

Saturday, Feb. 21

Lotto 6/49: 11, 20, 33, 34, 37 & 39. Bonus 22.

These results are not official.

No new cutbacks on road to 'I do'



Models walk down the stage during a fashion show at the Brides 2009 event at the World Trade and Convention Centre yesterday.

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

It seems brides aren't going to let a little thing like a global economic meltdown get in the way of their weddings.

The all things wedding-related convention Brides 2009 saw much higher than expected turnout at the World Trade and Convention Centre yesterday. Organizers had thought the economic downturn might cause a drop-off, but it ended up having the opposite effect.

Jeff Archibald and Katie Matson were there shopping around, and said the recession hasn't changed their approach.

"For the most part you're young starting out, and you don't really have a whole lot," said Archibald.

"I think whether there's a recession or not, we're going to go with the most cost-effective wedding we could possibly have."

That makes the trade show a valuable tool. Dozens of vendors had set

"We want to find the cheapest route, but at the same time not sacrifice anything."

Edward Davis

up displays on everything from DJs to dinner plates. Consumers were able to comparison shop without having to leave the building.

"It's really impressive. There are a lot of vendors here and a lot of things that we wouldn't have thought of," said Matson.

Some found inventive solutions to cutting down costs. Edward Davis and Michelle Fournier are looking at heading south

to hold their wedding in a cheaper, tropical country.

"Everyone's in the same boat as us. We want to find the

cheapest route, but at the same time not sacrifice anything," said Davis.

"(Going south is) a vacation for everybody. We kind of need you for half a day, one day, and the rest of the time you can do what you want."

Brides 2009 organizer Debbie Fennell didn't have hard numbers yet during the day yesterday. But she said it was easy to tell just by looking at the busy crowds hustling into the convention that attendance was up over last year.

22 saved from Spanish ship

RESCUE The Canadian Coast Guard rescued 22 fishermen from the Spanish fishing vessel the Monte Galineiro yesterday after the vessel sank about 400 kilometres off St. John's.

Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre spokeswoman Jeri Grychowski said yesterday there was a fire aboard the boat, and that's what made it sink. She

said all the crew aboard the 100-foot ship were saved by the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Leonard J. Cowley, which was only about 10 minutes away from the vessel when it went down.

The Cowley is on its way to St. John's with the crew members, who Grychowski said are doing well.

METRO HALIFAX

Baker steps down citing health

Provincial Finance Minister Michael Baker has stepped down from his cabinet position for health reasons.

Baker has been praised by all parties in recent years for doing his job as finance minister despite battling skin cancer since 2006.

While Baker will keep the title, Chris d'Entremont will take over as

acting finance minister for the coming months, said Wade Keller, Premier Rodney MacDonald's director of communications. d'Entremont is currently minister of Community Services and Acadian Affairs.

Last year Baker received a standing ovation when he unveiled the provincial budget. Even opposition

MLAs who voted against the budget applauded his dedication. Earlier this month a Bridgewater justice centre was named after him.

In early January, Baker said he planned on re-offering in the next election. However, his condition has worsened in the weeks since then.

PAUL MCLEOD/METRO HALIFAX

United Way beats \$5.8M fundraising goal

United Way donors in the Halifax area dug deep in 2008 and came up with more than \$5.8 million.

And the agency hopes we'll do it again next year.

"It was exhilarating to come up with a goal and to exceed it. The sobering part of it is that the goal is directly related to the need. It does give you an indication of how great the need is," CTV anchor Steve Murphy, United Way campaign co-

chair, told Metro News.

Murphy and his co-chair, Credit Union Atlantic president Jamie Baillie, have signed up again to helm the 2009 campaign.

It may be a tough sell, with the economy expected to be sluggish all year, but Murphy says that's even more reason to donate.

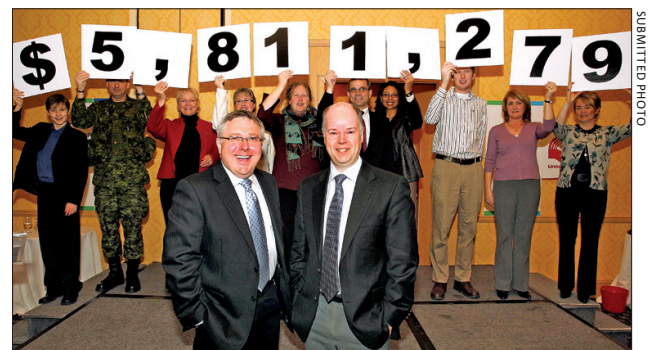
"The duty of society is only greater in difficult economic times, to take care of those who can't take care of

themselves."

Murphy said by staying on, he and Baillie hope they'll be able to get the 2009 campaign started earlier, because they already understand how the agency works.

No goal has been set for the 2009 campaign. The United Way said last year, it had 30 per cent more requests for funding than it had money to offer the agencies it helps.

RACHEL BOOMER/METRO HALIFAX



United Way campaign co-chairs Steve Murphy and Jamie Baillie stand before volunteers showing the amount of money raised during the charity's 2008 campaign. Murphy and Baillie have volunteered to work on the campaign again in 2009.

Province boosts EnerGuide rating required for rebates

Want some green for making your new house green? The province is raising the EnerGuide rating required for its rebates. New homes will have to get an 80 rating for a \$250 rebate. If your house gets an 83 rating, you'll get an extra \$500 rebate. For more information, visit conservens.ca. **METRO HALIFAX**

Yoga **The power of om**

Yoga practitioners perform an eagle pose yesterday at Moksha Yoga. The yoga studio hosted three mega-sessions yesterday as part of a nationwide Power of Movement event that raised money for arthritis research. Approximately \$6,000 was raised locally.

Courageous talk

Sierra Leone war victim visits Citadel High

JENNIFER CASEY
for Metro Halifax



When Mariatu Kamara was 12, rebel soldiers in Sierra Leone — themselves just children — raped and tortured her for more than 10 hours.

Then they cut off her hands.

"They handed me over to boys with big machetes and guns. I couldn't fight them," Kamara, 22, told 300 Citadel High students on Friday.

She was kidnapped along with her cousin, Adama, from their village in April 1999. Having her hands cut off wasn't unusual; UNICEF says thousands of children suffered the same fate. Why their hands? The rebels didn't want them to vote — a task people use their hands for.

"At times I felt like killing myself because of the heartbreak. I couldn't imagine living without my hands."

"I think as someone living in North America, we take advantage of a lot of the resources we have and we don't realize the hardships that are going on around us."

Citadel High student Alixandra Drew

Kamara survived a decade-long war in her country, and emigrated to Toronto seven years ago. She learned English there while going to high school, and is now studying social work at George Brown College.

She speaks across the country to spread the word about the work UNICEF does to help children in situations like hers. She also recently released a book, *The Bite of the Mango*, about her story.

Student Alixandra Drew, 18, said she was in awe of Kamara.

"I'm blown away. I don't know how somebody could have that much courage," said Drew.

"I think as someone liv-

ing in North America, we take advantage of a lot of the resources we have and we don't realize the hardships that are going on around us."

Robert Kelbrat, 16, said Kamara showed a lot of courage.

"I was shocked how much courage she had. She didn't have any tears, and her story was amazing. How she actually came over and spent her time with us to tell us her story, I think it's incredible that she could do that," said Kelbrat. "I kind of almost teared up a bit — it was just so sad."

ShareYourViews

halifaxletters@metronews.ca

Students pack up for rebuilding trip

JON TATTIE
for Metro Halifax



At least 150 students from Dalhousie and King's universities boarded buses bound for Biloxi, Miss., Friday night to help rebuild areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

As snow fell through the darkening night, six buses prepared to leave the campus for the two-day journey. Dozens of students milled around the parking lot, making final preparations to spend their study week working for Habitat for Humanity.

Jesse Howatt, a community design student at Dalhousie, is making his second trip to the region ravaged by Katrina in 2005.

Last year, he joined a group of about 50 students who travelled to New Orleans to help rebuild a "musicians' village" in the badly hit capital of Louisiana.

"We got to work with some of the homeowners," he said, noting the residents have been touched by the support coming all

the way from Canada.

"I didn't really know what I was getting myself into, but once you're down there and start working, it feels great," he said. "The only skills I have are the ones I picked up last year."

Metro caught up with organizer Aaron Vomberg as

he raced about Howe Hall, herding dozens of students onto the buses. It's his third home-building trip to the U.S. south. The first year, it was just 18 students in minibuses; last year, it was 54 on a bus. When he put out the word for this year's trip, he was overwhelmed by nearly 200 applicants.

"We could have taken another two buses," he said. "Biloxi was probably the hardest hit area by Hurricane Katrina and is probably the most susceptible to other hurricanes."

Vomberg, who is studying architecture and urban planning at Dal, didn't know what his team would be working on this year, only that all 150 members would be together.

News in brief

COURT Peggy Draper will spend the next two years behind bars for an investment scam that took \$330,000 from her victims. Draper, 59, was sentenced Friday at Nova Scotia Supreme Court on 10 counts of theft and one of attempted fraud. Draper was a Bedford town councillor, a member of the former Halifax County-Bedford school board, and later a member of the Halifax Regional School Board.

ROBBERY A masked man robbed a Woodside Tim Hortons at knife-point Friday. At about 7 p.m., the man entered the store at 365 Pleasant St. and confronted employees with a knife. The suspect is described as male, about five-foot-seven, wearing a dark-coloured jacket, baggy blue jeans, a long brown shirt and military style boots. No one was hurt in the robbery.

ACCIDENT A two-vehicle accident on Saturday shut down Highway 102 for about two hours. The vehicles collided near exit 2a, near Lacewood Drive, at about 7:40 p.m. A 65-year-old male suffered minor injuries and was taken to hospital as a precaution.

CRASH A driver lost control of her vehicle, causing it to flip several times before landing in a ditch between the Kearney Lake Road exit and Hammond Plains Road Saturday. The lone female driver was able to get out of the car and was not injured in the 9 a.m. crash. **METRO HALIFAX**

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The father of two small children found dead in their home in the Quebec community of Piedmont will be questioned by investigators as soon as possible, police said yesterday. He was discovered Saturday in need of medical attention for an apparent drug overdose, police said, along with the bodies of a three-year-old girl and five-year-old boy. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada



Silver Dart replica lifts off

Nearly 1,000 people lined the shores of Nova Scotia's Baddeck Bay yesterday morning to watch a former Canadian astronaut fly a replica of the Silver Dart, a day before the 100th anniversary of the first powered flight in Canada. Bjarni Trygvason lifted off from the frozen bay in the fragile biplane and flew for about 10 metres before setting down. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Kids' deaths alarm advocate

90 children in Ontario welfare system died in 2007: Report

Ninety children known to Ontario's child welfare system died in 2007, according to the latest report from the chief coroner's office — a number the province's new child advocate says is shocking and should trouble us all.

Equally disturbing, says Irwin Elman in his first annual report to the legislature today, is the government's refusal to share detailed information on the deaths with his office.

"These are obviously very critical documents for the understanding of the events leading to the death of the child or youth, and

entirely necessary for the work of the Advocacy Office," Elman writes in the report entitled 90 Deaths: Ninety Voices Silenced. "The matter of access to information is one that we will pursue vigorously."

In an interview, Elman, who has worked with youth in the care of Children's Aid Societies in Toronto for more than 20 years, said he had "no idea" so many of these vulnerable children, who were either open cases of the CAS or had died within a year of their files being closed, could perish in a single year in Ontario. Nor

did he know that the number of children who have died has been constant since the late 1990s, when the coroner's office began tracking their deaths.

Elman notes the deaths represent less than a quarter of all children who died in the province in 2007 and are a fraction of the 26,260 open cases of Children's Aid Societies. But

the number of deaths is "too high by any standard."

"These are children that we, as a province, have determined are in some peril and should be receiving the best of what we, as their parents, have to offer," he said. "So how could 90 of them die? I want all of us to be thinking about that."

The 90 deaths in 2007 are recorded as part of the chief coroner's annual Pediatric Death Review Committee report released last June. Most of the deaths were preventable, the committee concluded.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Irwin Elman

Asian pop star to testify in Van on photo scandal

COURT Asian pop star Edison Chen, who fled Hong Kong in disgrace a year ago after nude photos of himself with other celebrities were posted on the Internet, is scheduled to appear in an unusual court hearing today in Vancouver.

After months of silence, Chen, a singer and actor who grew up in Vancouver and is one of Asia's most recognized faces, is to testify before a Hong Kong judge and lawyers over the next five days. A Canadian judge and Hong Kong's chief magistrate will be co-commissioners at the hearing as Hong Kong police question Chen.

Shortly afterwards, explicit photos of him with different women, some identifiable as famous actresses, singers and models, began appearing online.

The hearing is taking place in Vancouver because Chen, 28, refused to return to Hong Kong to give evidence at the trial of computer technician Sze Ho-Chun, who is facing charges of distributing via the Internet pictures of the actor having sex with female celebrities.

Chen's trouble began after he took his broken laptop in for repairs in Hong Kong.

Shortly afterwards, explicit photos of him with different women, some identifiable as famous actresses, singers and models, began appearing online. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Claim to fame

- Chen's fame skyrocketed after the photos were leaked, and Google said last December his name was the most searched in Asia.

Calgary Model cars dazzle at auto show



Joey Viveiros, 9, takes a close-up look at the competition at the Table Top Model Car Club's 25th Anniversary World of Wheels Model Car Contest 2009, which was featured at the 43rd annual Auto Value World of Wheels show over the weekend in Calgary

Afghan development may be way of future for Ottawa

POLITICS Washington's new focus on development and diplomacy in Afghanistan could point the direction for Ottawa's future role in the troubled nation after Canadian troops are withdrawn in 2011, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon says.

"That's an option that can be envisaged, but we have to take into consideration that from now until 2011, it's a long period of time," Cannon said yesterday in an interview.

Afghanistan will top the agenda tomorrow when Cannon meets his American counterpart, Secretary

of State Hillary Clinton, in Washington for the first time.

Cannon said he expects to talk to Clinton about the new administration's ongoing review of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan while also providing a review of Ottawa's own strategy in the country's south, where some 2,500 Canadian troops are based.

U.S. President Barack Obama has promised up to 30,000 additional American soldiers for Afghanistan, 17,000 of them announced last week. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

One of many

- Cannon's meeting with Clinton is one of a series of high-level talks planned for the upcoming weeks as the federal government tries to build on the momentum sparked by President Barack Obama's Ottawa visit last week.

Foreign workers focus of new law

PROTECTION The federal government intends to bring in new regulations to punish employers who exploit foreign workers by forcing them to toil in poor conditions for low pay. The new rules, expected by March, would prevent employers with repeated labour violations from bringing in foreign workers. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Childhood abuse damages genes: Study

SCIENCE Researchers at Montreal's McGill University who looked at the brains of suicide victims said yesterday their findings have helped support theories that childhood abuse can alter the genes and cause lifelong damage.

They found clear changes in the brains of people who were abused as children and who committed suicide in comparison

to the brains of people who were not abused and who died in accidents or suicide.

This helps explain why childhood abuse, such as sexual abuse or neglect, can cause depression, other mental health effects and suicide, and could lead to treatments to help victims overcome their abusive childhoods.

McGill's Michael Meaney

and colleagues looked for changes in genes associated with a stress pathway called hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) function.

"In humans, childhood abuse alters HPA stress responses and increases the risk of suicide," Meaney's team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Neuroscience.

REUTERS

Recycling facility accused of abuses

CHINA A Chinese recycling facility that bought thousands of tons of paper from Toronto's blue box system has been accused by a Hong Kong human rights organization of labour violations and causing numerous worker injuries and deaths.

Allegations of worker abuse published in April

2008 by Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour quote a saying among workers at the massive Nine Dragons plant in southern China: "Injury happens monthly; death happens quarterly."

Two Toronto brokers started shipping paper to Nine Dragons in 2007.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Italy cracks down on sexual predators

Italy's government rushed through a decree Friday toughening penalties for sex offenders after a spate of rapes blamed on immigrants sparked national outrage. **REUTERS**

World

Blast kills miners

Seventy dead, at least 60 trapped in China

An explosion in a mine belonging to China's biggest coking coal producer killed more than 70 miners in Shanxi province yesterday and scores more were rescued after being trapped underground for hours.

Xinhua news agency said 436 miners were working underground when the accident occurred at the Tuntan mine near Taiyuan, the capital of the northern province.

Many of the survivors were quickly brought to the

surface but at least 60 were trapped underground. Rescuers said some of the trapped miners managed to contact their families on their mobile phones.

Xinhua said 114 miners were in hospital and five were in a critical condition.

"The focus of our effort has shifted from searching and rescue to medical treatment," Xinhua quoted the provincial Communist Party committee chief Zhang Baoshun as saying.

The gas blast happened

the day after senior provincial officials held a conference about mine safety when they pledged to try to put an end to fatal mining accidents. The mine produces coking coal for the steel industry and can produce five million tons a year, Xinhua said.

It is owned by Shanxi Coking Coal Group which is the parent of Shenzhen-listed Shanxi Xishan Coal and Electricity Power and Shanghai-listed Shanxi Coking Co. **REUTERS**

Kashmir Shooting sparks anger



A Kashmiri girl shouts slogans during the funeral of Mohammed Amin in Bumai, India, yesterday. Protests erupted in Indian Kashmir over the killing of two Muslim youth in a shooting incident blamed on the army, police and witnesses said. Authorities have ordered a probe into the deaths.

Taliban nabs top official, six guards

PAKISTAN Taliban militants kidnapped the top government administrator and six of his guards in Pakistan's northwestern Swat valley yesterday, the group and officials said, dealing a blow to efforts to restore peace.

Authorities in North West Frontier Province announced plans to give people weapons for self-defence after a deal with a leading cleric of Swat, Maulana Sufi Mohammad, to restore Islamic laws in the hope that he would persuade the militants to give up fighting.

The province's chief minister, Amir Haider Khan Hoti, said in a statement the government would distribute 30,000 rifles in rural areas to help villagers tackle terrorism.

The kidnapping of Khushal Khan, district co-ordination officer of Swat, set back government hopes of curbing violence in the valley. **REUTERS**

News in brief

U.S. An 11-year-old boy is facing adult charges in the shooting death of his father's pregnant girlfriend, authorities told CNN.com Saturday. Police allege the boy shot Kenzie Marie Houk, who was eight months pregnant, once at point-blank range in her farmhouse in Pennsylvania. The boy, who could not be named, was charged with one count each of criminal homicide and homicide of an unborn child.

POLITICS U.S. President Barack Obama vowed strict oversight of his \$787-billion US stimulus plan Friday, pushing back against Republicans who have labeled the centrepiece of his economic agenda fiscally irresponsible, Reuters reports. Obama said he would name a team of managers to ensure that billions of dollars slated to go toward infrastructure projects would be spent wisely.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Child uncovers old skeleton

DISCOVERY A child in Bahía Inglesa, Chile, found a skeleton while building a sandcastle yesterday.

José Carrasco of Chile's Investigation Police said the bones could be at least 100 years old and that the skeleton is incomplete, but added the age must be confirmed by experts at the Regional Museum of Copiapó. **METRO CHILE**

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Comment

Are you recession ready?

HineSight

Anne Hines



An advantage of working as a writer is that you're never aware that the economy *isn't* in recession. For most members of my profession, being a writer in Canada is about as lucrative as being an actor in Canada or a women's hockey player anywhere. Still it's impossible to deny that our current economic situation may be going from bad to "Ho boy, that hurts." So for those who did not plan ahead by weaning your family off expensive luxuries such as food and housing, here's a quick questionnaire to test whether you're prepared for what might lie ahead.

Are You Recession-Ready?

1.) Do you see this Metro newspaper as:

- a) A convenient, cost-efficient means of accessing news and entertainment?
- b) Toilet paper.

2.) When tallying up your saleable assets do you include:

- a) Your condo, car and the sorry remains of your stock portfolio.
- b) Your vital organs.

3.) In order to balance your household budget, will your strategy be to:

- a) Offset rising grocery prices by decreasing wasted food.
- b) Offset rising grocery prices by decreasing the squirrel population.

4.) Izaak Walton famously said, "Health is a blessing money cannot buy." In your opinion these are the words of:

- a) A wise visionary.
- b) Someone who never had to live without a prescription drug plan.

Riding the Recession

5.) Which of these traits do you consider most useful in surviving a recession?

- a) Patience, restraint and hope.
- b) The ability to chew and digest tree bark.

6.) The best way to save money on your children is by encouraging them to explore the time-honoured traditions of:

- a) Simple pleasures.
- b) Running away and joining

a circus.

7.) If faced with a choice between giving up your VIP cable TV package or selling your mother into white slavery, would your response be:

- a) This is outrageous. I love my mother.
- b) Does the package include the fishing channel?

8.) For you, the upside of this recession is realizing that:

- a) What really matters are friends and family.
- b) You'll still have something to complain about long after winter is done.

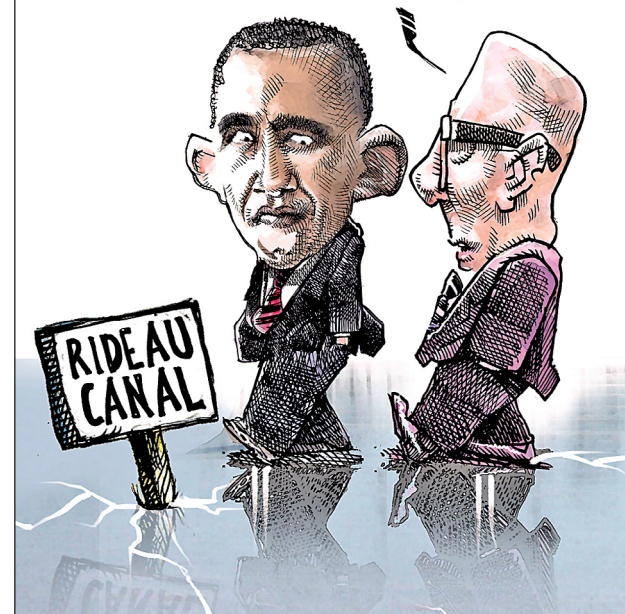
If you answered a) to all or most of these questions, you have as much chance of beating this recession as a Timbits team up against the Calgary Flames.

But, if you answered b) to all or most of these questions, you're recession ready and good to go ... anywhere except the mall.

Anne Hines is an author and humour writer. She has written three novels and one collection of nonfiction humour.

After metro

ONE THING IS TRUE, IN CANADA YOU CAN LITERALLY WALK ON WATER.



MICHAEL DE ADER

Metro Online Poll Results

26% SAID YES

Were you taken by President Obama's Canadian charm offensive?

74% SAID NO

Weigh in on today's question at metronews.ca

Views

Support your neighbours in tough times

UrbanScrawl

Christina Biluk

theurbanscrawl@gmail.com

Earlier this week I was inspired by a woman who showed me how everyone can make a difference in someone's life. She showed me that it's the size of your heart that matters.

Shari Tucker is a local photographer. Several years ago she was approached by Photo Sensitive, a not-for-profit organization, to take a photo of a cancer survivor, family member, or someone that has been lost to the disease, to include in a travelling exhibit. She was inter-

ested in participating, but realized she was in a rare position, where she knew no one that had been stricken by cancer. A friend put her in touch with two survivors in the community, and they became Shari's inspiration for change.

Following their meeting, she was determined to find something she could do to help others be inspired by their stories of survival. Today, Shari is celebrating the publication of her second coffee-table book "Young and Fearless." This book is filled with amazing stories and engaging photographs of Nova Scotian cancer survivors of all ages and backgrounds. A book filled with hope, for people who need a bit of inspiration in their own journey.

Anyone can make a difference — Shari is an example of this. When some-

"Just because someone is diagnosed with cancer doesn't stop them from being your friend."

one tells you they've been diagnosed with cancer, it's one of those moments that make most people uncomfortable and unsure how to react. You want to show your support but generally have no idea how.

It's the little things we do that can make a difference. Here are some ideas. Start a neighbourhood "watch" group, with a collection of neighbours taking turns cleaning the driveway, or mowing the lawn. Bring them a prepared meal for the family, offer to watch their chil-

dren so they can get some much-needed alone time, drive them to a doctor's appointment, or just be there to visit and bring some cheer into their day. Anytime helps.

With so many of us living so far away from our natural support networks, our families, having a little bit of hope and support from the people around you — no matter how well you know them — could make a world of difference. Just because someone is diagnosed with cancer doesn't stop them from being your friend, neighbour or colleague. It also means that you shouldn't stop being that ally, when someone needs you the most.

Christina Biluk is Director of Engagement for FUSION Halifax. Visit FUSIONHalifax.ca to find out how to get involved in shaping our city.

Elected officials need to get their priorities straight

How do our elected officials set priorities?

It was just announced that in Nova Scotia elective surgeries will be halved for the next month or so to save money. This is a country that spends billions annually keeping CBC afloat, and on official bilingualism. Billions were spent on the Winter Olympics and they were prepared to spend billions more on the Commonwealth Games in Halifax. And on top of that tens of millions were spent on the upcoming Canada Winter Games.

Yet our roads are a mess. Winter maintenance gets worse each year. Our schools are closing down, and hospital bed closure is a regular occurrence. Who exactly says where the money is spent?

BRUCE DEVENNE,
LOWER SACKVILLE

Get involved, it's your land

Recently the Department of Environment released a public discussion document for the province's three new wilderness areas (Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, Ship Harbour Long Lake, and Shelburne River). The discussion paper, titled Socioeconomic Impact Analysis of Designating Wilderness Areas, identifies a range of land use values that have been noted to occur on these properties.

The document also identifies land use activities that will be potentially excluded from occurring on these lands once these properties are designated "wilderness areas." These wilderness areas are found on public land, and as such, all Nova Scotians have the right to contribute to the shaping of these three areas.

MATHEW COADY, DARTMOUTH

It's your turn to tell others what you think. Email your thoughts and opinions to: halifaxletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

New fridge can save energy

Replace your fridge with a new Energy Star model. That will save enough energy to light your home for nearly four months, according to Ed Begley Jr.'s Living Like Ed: A Guide to the Eco-Friendly Life. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

7

Going Green

Fine-tune your fridge

Did you know the ideal internal temperature of your fridge is usually between 3 C and 4 C? When your fridge is kept too cold, it wastes energy and can taint your food. To check, place an appliance thermometer in a glass of water on the middle shelf and let it stand for five to eight hours. If the reading is not in the ideal range, adjust the temperature accordingly.

DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION

EDITOR: MIKE.DEREZYCKY@METRONEWS.CA

Check out these gadgets

EarthTones

Sophia Dore & Andrew Laursen



earthtones.metro@gmail.com

When gadgets are mentioned, the first image that springs to mind is James Bond. We began to picture a slightly grungier secret agent.

The tuxedo shirt is a little less brilliantly white as Agent double-0-zero (a no emissions agent) forgoes bleach. As the agent jumps into a tricked-out diesel or hybrid car, he punches in co-ordinates to his Econav, which analyzes route options based on car and fuel type, and occupancy, telling our protagonist the best route to minimize carbon emissions.

Double-0-zero switches on his Samsung Blue Earth solar-powered cellphone (handset made of recycled bottles) and calls into headquarters to say he's run-

ning late (Econav is taking him on a slower, but less energy intensive route). Suddenly, he spots Dr. No on an electric motorbike (it's good to know even the villains are concerned about the environment) and the chase is on. Dr. No is getting away. Must be that V-Dimension Solar Backpack! He's probably using it to give his bike a bit of a boost. Oh well, thinks 000, leave him to 007.

Now at work, our agent heads across the lawn, narrowly dodging the Husqvarna Solar Hybrid Automower robot. This triggers something in his memory — the Estonian seductress Nonapussy, who used a vacuum cleaning robot to search his house while she kept him... occupied. Forcing

down the memory, double-0-zero springs into action. He grabs two cups of coffee, one for M, from the Tefal Quick Cup (using far less energy than a conventional coffee maker) and heads off to tell her of his suspicions about the new landscaping company.

In the main communications room, they consult the Kill-a-Watt, a power strip that indicates power usage by electronics. Ah, those dinosaur desktops really must be replaced! M switches on a Philips EcoTV (best in class, running on less electricity than a 100W light bulb) and turns to the National to see if there is any word on Nonapussy's whereabouts.

Suddenly, the power goes out! Must be Nonapussy and her minions. Double-0-zero cranks up his Freeplay Energy hand-crank radio to hear the end of the news (and truth be told, the lotto picks). M switches on her Dell Latitude D630c laptop to send out an alert. With its low power consumption

and long battery life, she should be in business for hours.

Double-0-zero, meanwhile, fires up his new MacBook, with similarly low power use and more recyclable components. This is his choice to cut down on e-waste, plus it has awesome graphics for his gaming.

M's cellphone rings and she learns that Nonapussy is outside the building. Snatching 000 from his Dragon Quest V, they race out the door, down the path lit by glowing LED wind turbines, and capture the elusive spy. The end.

The above is not meant to endorse any specific product, but does point to some interesting gadgets out there for the eco-conscious. Of course, the danger in promoting gadgetry is it perpetuates the myth that technology is going to bail us out. While there are some neat energy-saving gadgets out there, the old credo "reduce, reuse, recycle" applies as much as ever.

Sophia Dore is an environmental scientist with Conestoga-Rovers & Associates. Andrew Laursen is an assistant professor at Ryerson University.

Sean Connery as James Bond.

Online tools can help understanding of three Rs

With each passing year, Canadians become more efficient with their recycling habits and routines.

But life's hectic pace means we're still learning how these recycling practices have an impact on a larger scale and new online tools are making it easier to calculate.

"Most Canadians don't know that recycling a plastic bottle saves 70 per

cent of the energy that would otherwise be used to create one from scratch," explains Paul Edney, director of Inspire Community and co-author of bestselling book Change the World for 10 Bucks.

"If we all understood the impact of recycling one plastic bottle, we'd probably be a lot better at making sure more of

them stay out of the waste stream."

Edney recently developed an interactive online recycling tracker, supported by the Aquafina brand, which aims to help Canadian families easily measure how their actions make a difference.

He recommends the following websites where Canadians can find simple and fun recycling tools

and calculators:

- www.aquafina-tracker.ca: Tracks recycling actions to understand the positive impact of recycling even a single plastic PET bottle or aluminum can.
- www.blueboxmore.ca: Provides a useful list of what items can be recycled and where.
- www.nrc-recycle.org/recyclingcalculator.aspx:

An online recycling "conversionator" that turns recycling facts into fun.

- www.zerofootprintkids.com: A resource for teachers to creatively use recyclables in the classroom.

- www.yousustain.com/games: An interactive website with games and quizzes to test recycling know-how.

NEWS CANADA

When you catch a chill, do you reach for the thermostat or a turtleneck? Energy efficiency can be as easy as donning a sweater or changing to a compact fluorescent light bulb. Simple changes can make a difference in your demand for power.

Designed to promote small changes that can help reduce our environmental impact, Future Friendly is a partnership between The Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance, Recycling Council of Ontario, canühome and some of Canada's leading home care brands such as Tide, Bounty, Cascade, Charmin, Downy and Duracell.

The following energy conservation tips will keep you enthusiastic about energy efficiency:

1. Hold the hot water

Heating water is one of the home's biggest energy costs. Shorter showers and low-flow shower heads can reduce its use. So can washing laundry in cold water.

2. Get smart about energy use

Your appliances can likely be more efficient. Two easy changes include switching to a high-efficiency washer, and using the energy-saving cycle on your dishwasher. And wait until the dishwasher is full before running it.

3. Buy batteries with enduring energy

Many of our portable devices require batteries. Rechargeable batteries are a great way to power MP3 players and digital cameras.

NEWS CANADA

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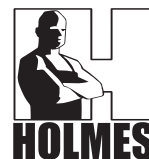
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The White House said Friday it strongly believed in a privately held bank system, "ensuring they are regulated sufficiently by this government." Rumours that the U.S. government could nationalize banks previously saw U.S. bank shares plummet. **REUTERS**

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

The DAILY BUSINESS BUZZ

Investor personalities:

One-third of Atlantic Canadians surveyed by Angus Reid said they would describe their investment personalities as analytical, opportunistic or risk-taking, followed by 17 per cent who consider themselves suspicious or skeptical. Seven per cent felt timid.

EastLink awarded:

For the third consecutive year, EastLink has been named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies. The award recognizes businesses that implement world-class business practices and create value through innovation.

Worker obesity:

Obesity in the workforce rose in the past decade. In 2005, 15.7 per cent of workers aged 18 to 64, more than two million people, were obese, up from 12.5 per cent in the mid-1990s. Obesity was most prevalent in those aged 55 to 64.

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DAILY BUSINESS BUZZ
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Visa, MasterCard eye debit market entrance

Two major international credit card companies are poised to enter Canada's debit market, a move that could dramatically alter the structure of the payments industry in Canada and stoke fears of higher fees for business and consumers.

Both Visa and MasterCard confirm they're interested in offering debit cards in Canada, a market now dominated by the non-profit Interac association, saying their presence would allow overseas use and online purchasing for

Interac's origins

- Interac was formed in 1996 as a non-profit, made up of banks, credit unions, ATM operators, gas stations and others. Non-profit status was used to take away the incentive to restrict access for profit.

consumers, and fee flexibility for merchants.

Canada's existing debit system is "broken," said Kevin Stanton, president of MasterCard Canada, saying it's one of the few

countries in the world where a non-profit monopoly controls the market, resulting in irrational pricing that precludes true market competition.

Merchants and small business owners say the fee paid by merchants to accept debit cards will go up — perhaps 300 per cent, said the Retail Council of Canada, at a cost of billions of dollars. Owners would then be forced to pass on to consumers, adds the Canadian Federation of Small Business.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Banks to turn profit, for now

EARNINGS It's a problem most of the world's bankers would love to have in 2009.

Canadian banks are expected to post weaker quarterly results when they kick off their reporting season on Feb. 25.

Yet unlike many U.S. and European lenders — ravaged by recession, forced to beg for government aid and dogged by rumours of nationalization — Cana-

da's banks are actually expected to turn a profit.

Analysts said the Canadian industry's conservative lending practices, which helped it avoid writedowns and losses, should ensure a profitable first quarter.

But they also predict profitability in the first quarter and for 2009 — but that may well deteriorate this year as Canada sinks further into recession.

REUTERS

Manufacturing bleeds jobs

A new study says Canada lost nearly 322,000 manufacturing jobs from 2004 to 2008, in almost all industries. Statistics Canada reports more than 1.5 million jobs were created in the rest of the economy in that period. Only the sectors of transportation equipment (excluding cars), petroleum and coal, and computers and electronics reported increases. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Singapore Casinos' costs rise



A view of the under-construction Marina Bay Sands casino project at sunrise in Singapore yesterday. Singapore media reported Friday that Las Vegas Sands and Genting International, which is building another casino on Sentosa Island, have both been hit by spiralling construction costs.

YVES PRANKASH/REUTERS

Inflation stalls for fourth month on autos, gas

ECONOMY Canadian consumer prices fell 0.3 per cent in January for the fourth month-to-month decline in a row as a sharp drop in the cost of buying and leasing cars was only partly offset by higher gasoline prices.

On an annual basis, prices lost momentum, rising 1.1 per cent last month, compared with 1.2 per cent in December, Statistics Canada said. Gas prices fell 23.5 per cent in January compared with a year earlier and the cost of

buying and leasing autos dropped, while food and shelter costs increased.

The annual inflation rate has fallen from a peak of 3.5 per cent in August. The report only confirmed that inflation is not a concern.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

BANKRUPTCY There have been a combined 33 bankruptcy filings in the U.S. in 2009, up from 14 at this point last year. Most filings come from large companies and those seeking protection for a multiple time.

RUSSIA Russian metals tycoon Oleg Deripaska, who is trying to restructure \$14 billion US in debt that United Company RUSAL owes to banks, said he does not need financial help from the state.

MADOFF Going back 13 years, there is no evidence that accused swindler Bernard Madoff bought securities for customer accounts, the trustee liquidating the firm to recover assets said Friday. **REUTERS**

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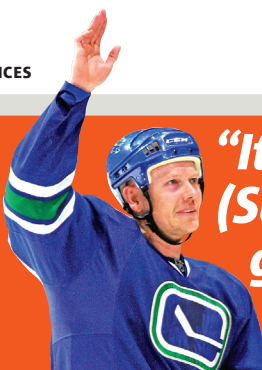
metro

Service Canada

Cowboys owner shoots down T.O. rumours

Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones on Saturday denied an ESPN report the team is considering releasing receiver Terrell Owens. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports



"It's just one of those nights where you give (Sundin) a chance like that, you know he's going to be able to score."

Former Leaf and current Canuck Kyle Wellwood on teammate Mats Sundin's game-winning shootout goal Saturday night over the Maple Leafs in his return to Toronto. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

EDITOR: JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Raptors double down on Knicks

NBA RESULT**Knicks 100 Raptors 111**

Andrea Bargnani scored a team-high 28 points and had 10 rebounds, while three other Raptors registered double-doubles as Toronto defeated the New York Knicks, 111-100, in the backend of a home-and-home set in Toronto yesterday.

Anthony Parker chipped in with 24 points, while Shawn Marion donated 16 points and 15 boards for the Raptors, who were embarrassed, dropping a 127-97 decision against the Knicks at Madison Square Garden on Friday. Despite snapping a two-game losing skid, Toronto has dropped eight of the last 11 overall.

"Coming off Friday's loss, we watched the film on that, embarrassing is the word that we said a lot," Parker said. "We wanted to come out and set a different tone from the beginning and just let them know that this isn't going to be that kind of night. And I think we did that for the most part."

Jose Calderon had 13 points and 11 assists, and Chris Bosh had a solid game with 11 points to go along with 12 rebounds for the Raptors, who have won nine straight against the Knicks at the Air Canada Centre.

In was the first time four Raptors registered double-doubles since a triple-overtime loss against Sacramento on Feb. 23, 2001.

David Lee recorded his 19th straight double-double, contributing 17



Toronto Raptor Shawn Marion goes up over New York Knick Al Harrington yesterday. The Raptors won 111-100.

points and 15 rebounds for New York. Nate Robinson scored 18 points to go along with eight assists,

while Chris Duhon had 17 points and seven helpers in defeat.

METRO NEWS SERVICES**Sports in brief**

MLB After the Atlanta Braves lost out on Ken Griffey Jr. last week, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported yesterday that the team has agreed to

terms with veteran outfielder Garret Anderson on a one-year contract. The newspaper reports the deal will be announced today. Anderson,

who has spent his entire 15-year career with the Angels, hit 15 home runs with 84 RBIs last season.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Penguins' slump continues

NHL RESULT**Penguins 2 Capitals 5**

Shaone Morrisonn and Brooks Laich scored goals 25 seconds apart in the second period to break open a tight game, as the Washington Capitals notched a 5-2 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins in D.C. yesterday.

Morrisonn, Alexander Ovechkin, Sergei Fedorov and Alexander Semin each

finished with a goal and an assist for the Capitals, who bounced back from Friday's home setback against Colorado to win for the fourth time in five games. Jose Theodore made 31 saves in the victory.

"They were ticked off and wanted to make amends," Caps head coach Bruce Boudreau said about the team's motivation following Friday's loss. "They know when they play bad and don't want to let that happen often."

Maxime Talbot and Sergei Gonchar each scored for Pittsburgh, which was coming off a pair of 5-4 victories

over Philadelphia and Montreal.

The Penguins are just 1-4-2 in their last seven road games, with the lone victory in that span coming Saturday at Philadelphia.

"We played well yesterday and got a big win. We came in here, worked hard today, didn't have some things go our way. We move on," said Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby, who notched an assist. "Four (points this weekend) would've been a success. It's not good to lose, but at the same time we still had some good things that went on."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

U.S. skier sets new record for victories

Lindsey Vonn became the most successful American skier in the women's World Cup yesterday when victory in a super-G gave her a 19th race win.

She overtook Tamara McKinney's previous record of 18 wins, when, after starting cautiously, she finished at full speed to claim victory in one minute, 21.72 seconds in the Italian resort of Tarvisio.

Swiss specialist Fabienne Suter, winner of two super-Gs last season in Bormio and Sestriere, again seemed inspired by Italy as she finished second, 0.51 seconds adrift.

Slovenia's Tina Maze, the world giant slalom silver-medallist, was 0.67 behind in third.

"This is a special victory because this is the 19th and I've been thinking about it since I equalled Tamara's record in Garmisch," Vonn, who won gold in the super-G at the world championships, told reporters.

"It was one of my main goals this weekend and it took the whole weekend to get it," added the American, who finished second in the two previous races of the weekend in Tarvisio.

Her runner-up spots in Friday's super-combined and Saturday's downhill had left the World Cup leader frustrated before she claimed her sixth victory of the season. **REUTERS**



South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius, right, is expected to make a full recovery after being hurt in a boating accident.

Amputee sprinter expected to recover after accident

South Africa's double amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius is expected to make a full recovery after undergoing surgery for facial injuries sustained in a boating accident, his manager Peet van Zyl told Reuters.

Pistorius, 22, was flung from the speedboat he was steering on the Vaal River south of Johannesburg on Saturday night, local media reports said. "Oscar was in surgery for most of the afternoon to fix fractures in his jaw and nose region. He was then transferred to the ICU for normal post-operative observation. The doctors are quite happy with how the operation went and he is expected to make a full recovery," Van Zyl told Reuters yesterday.

"We will obviously wait

for medical advice, but Oscar should still be able to fulfil his international commitments like the Paralympic World Cup."

Pistorius, who had both legs removed between the knee and ankle as a baby, is nicknamed "Blade Runner" because of the prosthetic legs that enable him to sprint.

He began competing against able-bodied athletes in 2007, but the governing IAAF banned him after ruling that his artificial limbs gave him an unfair advantage.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport lifted the ban in May last year and although he missed out on qualification for the Olympics, he won three gold medals in the Beijing Paralympics.

REUTERS

Fairview mixed martial arts fighter Roger Hollett lost for the third time in his past four outings at the Maximum Fighting championship near Edmonton on Friday. Hollett (8-3) fell to UFC veteran David Heath (10-4) by guillotine submission in the first round. **METRO HALIFAX**

Mooseheads outgunned

High-powered QMJHL opponents dole out back-to-back losses

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The Halifax Mooseheads met a predictable fate against a pair of high-powered opponents on the weekend.

The Mooseheads didn't get so much as a sniff against the nationally-ranked Quebec Remparts and Shawinigan Cataractes at the Metro Centre, slipping further into the QMJHL basement and five points out of a playoff spot.

Shawinigan cruised to an easy 7-3 win on Saturday, while Quebec earned a decisive 8-4 victory yesterday.

"We didn't play that bad," said Mooseheads forward Alexis Piette, the third star yesterday with a goal and two assists. "Teams like Shawinigan and Quebec have such talented players ... Their first three lines are so skilled, they take advantage of bad turnovers and the puck ends up behind the goalie."

The Mooseheads got behind 4-0 in the first period yesterday against the Remparts before finally striking back with 57 seconds left in the frame. They played an outstanding second period, outshooting Quebec 16-8 and narrowing the gap to 4-2 when Piette scored his 14th of the season at 15:06.

"The second period against them was one of our best periods of the year," said Mooseheads forward Yuri Cheremetiev, who had a goal and an assist. "All four lines were going, the effort was there, we got the puck on net. That's what we've gotta do."

The turning point came



Mooseheads forward Gerrad Grant tries to get off a shot as Quebec Remparts goalie Jonathan Roy scrambles back to the net during the second period of last night's QMJHL game at the Metro Centre. Roy made the save and backstopped the Remparts to an 8-4 victory.

in the third when the Mooseheads got an early power play, but gave up a shorthanded marker to Samuel Groulx on a break-away at 2:37 to fall behind 5-2. The Remparts added three more in the third to seal it.

With only nine games remaining, Halifax (16-37-3-3, 38 points) is in desperate need of a spark. The Mooseheads must pass at least two of Baie-Comeau (43 points), Val-d'Or (43 points) and Lewiston (42 points) to

make the playoffs.

"We've got to find a way to steal points the rest of the season," Piette said. "We're playing against good teams from now on and we have to get points against them to make it." Maple Leafs draft pick

Mikael Stefanovich led Quebec's charge with four goals.

Mooseheads goalie Mark Yetman was pulled after allowing three goals on 10 shots, while rookie forward Gabriel Desjardins had a goal and an assist.

Huskies to face Aigles Bleus

HOCKEY The Saint Mary's Huskies, fresh off a week's rest, will face the Moncton Aigles Bleus in the Atlantic University Sport men's hockey best-of-five semifinals this week.

The second-place Huskies had a first-round bye and watched the Aigles Bleus fight past the P.E.I. Panthers 2-1 in the best-of-three quarter-finals with last night's 4-3 win.

The first-place New Brunswick Varsity Reds will face the fifth-ranked Acadia Axemen in the other semifinal.

METRO HALIFAX

Rainmen's playoff hopes dinged

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

DEFEAT The Halifax Rainmen's championship hopes are fading as they say goodbye to the Metro Centre for a full month.

The Rainmen, who don't have a home game until March 22, dropped a crucial contest against the Vermont Frost Heaves on Friday, 100-98. It was a devastating blow to their bid for a Premier Basketball League wildcard spot.

The Rainmen (8-7) are

all but out of the race to catch the Manchester Millrats (12-3) for first in the Atlantic Conference, and they trail Wilmington (9-4), Vermont (8-6), and Augusta (7-5) for a berth in the wildcard play-in game.

With five games to go, are the playoffs within reach?

"Absolutely, yeah," said Rainmen head coach Les Berry. "We're only half a game back. You've got to take care of your own backyard first — win the games you're playing —

"You've got to take care of your own backyard first ... and hope that one other team will let a game slip."

Coach Les Berry

and hope that one other team will let a game slip."

Poor free-throw shooting did the Rainmen in on Friday. They recovered from a 15-point second-quarter deficit and tied

Vermont nine times down the stretch, but missed 28 of 55 free throws and never managed to grab a lead. John Williams won it with a jumper with 29 seconds left.

Halifax plays three times on the road before returning home. They visit the Montreal Sasquatch on Friday. Berry said the time away from home will be a good test.

"In order to win a championship you have to win on the road, so this will be a good chance for that," he said.

Tigers defeat first-place X-Men

BASKETBALL The Dalhousie Tigers are gaining momentum for the Atlantic University Sport men's basketball playoffs.

The fourth-place Tigers (11-7) knocked off the first-place St. Francis Xavier X-Men yesterday in Antigonish courtesy of a 28-point effort from guard Simon Farine. Halifax natives Tyler Richards (30 points) and Christian Upshaw (28 points) starred for the X-Men. Elsewhere yesterday, the third-place Saint Mary's Huskies (12-7) beat the New Brunswick Varsity Reds 72-67.

Women's playoffs kick off on Friday

BASKETBALL The stage is set for the Atlantic University Sport women's basketball championship at Dalplex.

The regular season wrapped up yesterday, and the host Dalhousie Tigers (14-6) finished third overall and have a quarter-final tilt with the sixth-place Acadia Axewomen (7-13). The tournament begins on Friday at Dalplex.

The fourth-place St. Francis Xavier X-Women (16-4) face the fifth-place New Brunswick Varsity Reds (8-12).

The first-place Memorial Sea-Hawks (16-4) and Cape Breton Capers (15-5) have first-round byes.

METRO HALIFAX

Sports in brief

CURLING Nancy McConnery was 1-1 at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts Canadian women's curling championship in Victoria as of late last night. The Dartmouth skip followed up an opening-round victory with a 9-1 loss to defending champion Jennifer Jones yesterday. Her late score against Alberta's Cheryl Bernard was not available at press time.

CIS SWIMMING The Dalhousie Tigers placed sixth on the men's side and seventh on the women's side in the overall team standings at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport swimming championships yesterday in Vancouver.

SNOWBOARDING Dartmouth's Sarah Conrad was Canada's top finisher in fourth place in the half-pipe event at a World Cup snowboard event in Stoneham, Que., on the weekend.

METRO HALIFAX

SCOREBOARD

QMJHL				
ATLANTIC DIVISION				
	W	L	OT	P
x-Moncton	44	10	6	94
x-Cape Breton	40	17	4	84
x-Saint John	29	26	4	62
Bathurst	20	28	12	52
P.E.I.	21	29	9	51
HALIFAX	16	37	6	38
x-clinched playoff spot				

The Pitt-Jolie connection

Taraji P. Henson enjoyed working with Brad Pitt on the Curious Case of Benjamin Button so much, she plans to team up with his partner, Angelina Jolie, for a film as soon as they can free up some time in their busy schedules. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

11

Entertainment

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Star power

George Clooney has been granted a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama to discuss the crisis in Darfur. Clooney, a UN messenger of peace, will ask Obama to help end conflict. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Slumdog sweeps Oscars

Rags-to-riches romance picks up eight awards

Rags-to-riches romance Slumdog Millionaire scooped up eight Oscars on Sunday, the most of any movie this year, including best motion picture.

Among the Slumdog honours, Briton Danny Boyle was named best director for the often dark but ultimately hopeful tale about a poor Indian boy who competes for love and money on a TV game show, and writer Simon Beaufoy won adapted screenplay.

"You've been so generous to us this evening, and I want to thank you for that," Boyle said to the Academy Award audience when accepting his Academy Award.

Boyle also thanked his family, the film's makers, and the entire city of Mumbai, where Slumdog was shot.

Kate Winslet was named best actress for her dramatic turn as a former Nazi prison guard who involves herself in a love affair with a teenage boy in The Reader. She fought back tears when accepting her trophy and remembered a time as an 8-year-old when she dreamed of winning one of the world's top film award.

Sean Penn earned his second Oscar for best actor, portraying slain gay rights activist Harvey Milk in Milk.

Early honours went to Penelope Cruz who became the first Spanish actress to win an Academy Award for her supporting role in Vicky Cristina Barcelona. Heath Ledger was posthumously named best supporting actor for his villainous role as The Joker in Batman movie The Dark Knight.

But Slumdog was the big winner, also earning Oscars for best cinematography, sound mixing, film editing, original score for composer A.R. Rahman and best song, Jai Ho for Rahman and lyricist Gulzar.

In the night's one big surprise, Japanese movie Departures beat the fa-



Philippe Petit, right, celebrates after his film Man on Wire won the Oscar for best documentary feature at 81st annual Academy Awards at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles last night.

vorite, Israeli film Waltz With Bashir for foreign language film.

Holding back tears when her award was announced, Cruz thanked Woody Allen, director of Vicky Cristina Barcelona, and Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, who was instrumental in putting her on a track to stardom. She dedicated the Oscar to her family and "everyone who has helped me from the beginning."

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

The award for Ledger, who died last year of an accidental prescription drug overdose, brought the crowd to its feet. He became only the second actor after Peter Finch to win posthumously.

The Oscar was accepted by his father, Kim Ledger, sister Kate and mother Sal-

ly Bell. "This award tonight would have humbly validated his quiet determination to be truly accepted by you all here, his peers, in an industry he truly loved," Kim Ledger said.

In other awards, Dustin Lance Black won the best original screenplay Oscar for writing Milk, about slain gay activist Harvey Milk, and Wall-E, telling of a futuristic robot who finds love while on a polluted Earth, was best animated film.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button walked off with two statuettes for best art direction and makeup, and The Duchess won for best costume design.

Man on Wire about a tightrope walker who dared to walk between New York's Twin Towers was named best documentary.

As the ceremony began, host Hugh Jackman put the show in full musical mode with an opening routine that drew a standing ovation from the star-studded crowd that included nominees Brad



Penelope Cruz, top, picked up the award for best supporting actress last night while Danny Boyle received the best director award for Slumdog Millionaire.

Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Mickey Rourke and Anne Hathaway.

The number covered all five of the best film nominees and had Jackman dancing hip hop, hitting high notes in a duet with Hathaway for Frost/Nixon and climbing to the top rope of a fake wrestling ring to crescendo his song with The Wrestler.

REUTERS

Winners' list

- Motion Picture: Slumdog Millionaire.
- Actor: Sean Penn, Milk.
- Actress: Kate Winslet, The Reader.
- Supporting Actor: Heath Ledger, The Dark Knight.
- Supporting Actress: Penelope Cruz, Vicky Cristina Barcelona.
- Director: Danny Boyle, Slumdog Millionaire.
- Foreign Film: Departures, Japan.
- Adapted Screenplay: Simon Beaufoy, Slumdog Millionaire.
- Original Screenplay: Dustin

- Lance Black, "Milk."
- Animated Feature Film: WALL-E.
- Cinematography: Slumdog Millionaire.
- Costume: The Duchess.
- Makeup: The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.
- Animated Short Film: La Maison en Petits Cubes.
- Live Action Short Film: Spielzeugland (Toyland).
- Academy Award winners previously announced this season: Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (Oscar statuette): Jerry Lewis

Academy Awards

Chris Alexander

For a no-holds-barred account of how it all went down, read his blog at metronews.ca

REUTERS PHOTOS

Lopez, Anthony throw birthday party for twins

Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony celebrated the first birthday of twins Max and Emme with a party at their Bel Air home on Saturday. About 50 guests, including Nicole Ritchie, Joel Madden and their daughter Harlow, 1, attended the party. [PEOPLE.COM](#)

entertainment **12**

Oscar fashion: Hits and misses



HIT Anne Hathaway, left. Finally, someone that knows what glitz and glam are all about. Hathaway makes the stars shine and the red carpet sparkle.

The 81st Annual Academy Awards

Which stars wowed audiences with their gorgeous gowns? Which celebrities made the biggest fashion faux pas? Metro columnist Enza Anderson lays out the good, the bad and the ugly

RedHotCarpet

Enza Anderson

enza.supermodelanderson@gmail.com

of red carpet couture at the 81st annual Academy Awards last night.

MISS Mickey Rourke, right. Rourke may have played a wrestler in *The Wrestler* but he certainly couldn't body slam a good suit.



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

HIT Evan Rachel Wood, right. If Oscar could talk he would be asking for your number. Wood brings soft, sexy and sophisticated to the festivities in a beige chiffon looker. Work it, girlfriend.



BEST Virginia Madsen, left. Lady in red plus blond bombshell equals fabulous. Madsen was the perfect picture in red satin and strapless.



WORST Beyoncé Knowles, left. Beyoncé mixes black with gold flower print. After you finish with the dress my upholsterer needs it to finish some couches.



MISS Viola Davis, left. Gold has just been devalued by 50 per cent. Davis shows why gold satin died in the '70s.



HIT Marion Cotillard, above. Drag queens would kill for a dress like this. Cotillard proves big is beautiful with black and blue.



HIT Amy Adams, left. Little red riding hood move over, there's a new diva on the block. Adams certainly knows how to hold court in chiffon and corset.



MISS Miley Cyrus, left. Dressed in full gown and sequins means dressing down. She definitely learned something from her *Vanity Fair* cover.

MISS Sarah Jessica Parker, above. Fairy godmother headquarters called, you forgot your wand. Parker's strapless bustier and white gown has the making of a Walt Disney classic return of *Cinderella*.



The rumors started when his likeness was removed from his record's website and now Clay Aiken is setting the record straight: The former American Idol has parted ways with RCA Records, Aiken's rep has confirmed. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Rihanna speaks out after alleged assault

PEOPLE Rihanna spoke out for the first time since allegedly being assaulted by Chris Brown, issuing a statement of thanks to her fans, people.com reports.

"At the request of the authorities, Rihanna is not commenting about the incident involving Chris Brown," says the statement from her rep on Friday. "She wants to assure her fans that she remains strong, is doing well, and deeply appreciates the outpouring of support she has received during this difficult time."

The statement came on her 21st birthday and a day after she was spotted in Los Angeles after spending nearly two weeks in seclusion.

The singer was photographed Thursday head-

ing to an airport the same night a graphic photo reportedly showing her battered face surfaced on the Internet, upsetting her father, who criticized police for their "sloppy work."

Prior to the statement, neither Rihanna nor her representatives had commented since the arrest of Brown, 19, on Feb. 8.

On Friday, friends in Rihanna's native Barbados marked her birthday by taking out an ad in the local paper wishing her a happy 21st "amidst all the negativity about Ri Ri. God will continue to bless her."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Bon Jovi's fears losing his hair

IMAGE Jon Bon Jovi is not a fan of what's been happening to his hairline. The rocker, who sported an impressive mane back in the '80s, has been looking for ways to slow or stop the recession. "Oh, let me tell you, I am so worried," he says, according to Exposay.

"I look at guys like Sting and think, 'Well, he's cool about losing his hair.' But I'm already losing a bit and I'm so aware of it." Bon Jovi says he even massages his scalp every day to encourage the hair to grow back.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Miley defends 'close' relationship with dad

FAMILY Miley Cyrus has defended the loving relationship she enjoys with her father Billy Ray Cyrus — insisting their closeness is completely normal, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Hannah Montana star is frequently at her musician father's side in public — even inviting him to star on the hit Disney show as her on-screen dad.

She also posed with Billy Ray for a series of snaps in Vanity Fair maga-

zine last year, which showed Miley reclining against her dad as he puts his arm around her shoulder.

The shots were slammed by critics because of the pair's father-daughter relationship, but in her new memoir, Miles To Go, the teenager hits back.

She writes, "The media has said some stuff about my dad and me being too close and too cuddly for a father and a daughter. For me and my dad it's not weird at all."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Blair wanted to be a photographer

CAREER Actress Selma Blair was forced to abandon her dream of becoming a professional photographer after failing to break into the film industry, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Hellboy star studied photography during her youth — but turned her back on a camera career to become an actress.

"I did photography all through high school then I got a scholarship. But who

knew it was harder to break into photography than it was acting?" she said. But Blair admits she's not a fan of modern technology and prefers practising photography with old-fashioned film rolls.

She adds, "I still do (take

photos), but I like the old cameras. I don't like digital cameras, it's hard to find places that process films. But I have a box of undeveloped films under my bed, so when I die I hope someone finds it."

Meanwhile, the Kath & Kim actress has found love with her on-screen husband, actor Mikey Day.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Rourke's tribute to Roberts

PEOPLE Mickey Rourke paid a bizarre tribute to actor pal Eric Roberts at the Independent Spirit Awards — urging filmmakers to give him a chance and cast him in movies, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

After taking to the stage to collect the best male prize for his role in the Wrestler, Rourke addressed Roberts in the crowd.

Referring to his own dramatic comeback, he begged directors to give Roberts — his co-star in 1984 movie The Pope of Greenwich Village and

2002's Spun — a similar second shot at fame.

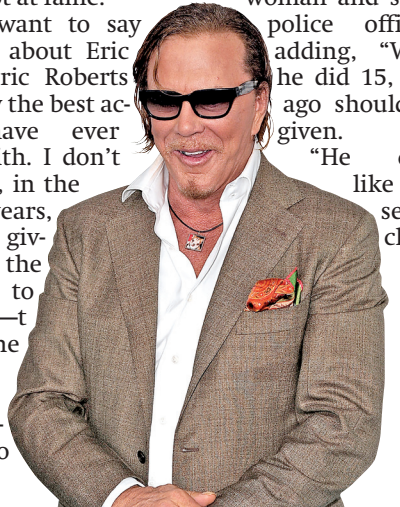
"I just want to say one thing about Eric Roberts. Eric Roberts is probably the best actor I have ever worked with. I don't know why, in the last 15 years, no one has given him the chance to show his s—t again," he said.

Rourke then alluded to Roberts'

1987 arrest for harassing a woman and striking a police officer, by adding, "Whatever he did 15, 20 years ago should be forgiven."

"He deserves, like I got, a second chance."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Allen says she is drunk 'most of the time'

PEOPLE Lily Allen is drunk "most of the time," femalefirst.co.uk reports. The singer claims she is often misrepresented, but not when it comes to her alcohol consumption.

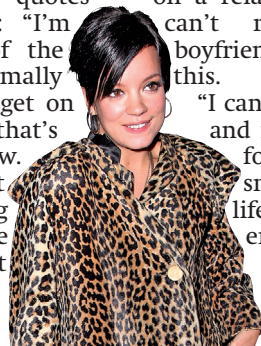
The website quotes her as saying: "I'm drunk most of the time. I'm normally drunk when I get on stage, but that's changing now. That was just the overbearing feeling last time I toured. Just drunkenness."

Allen has also confirmed speculation she is considering quitting the music industry, the website adds.

She said: "I can't live like that for much longer. It just does my head in. Also, on a relationship level, I can't really have a boyfriend when it's like this."

"I can't go to the shop and meet my friends for coffee. The small pleasures in life are completely eradicated."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



High hopes for twin sons

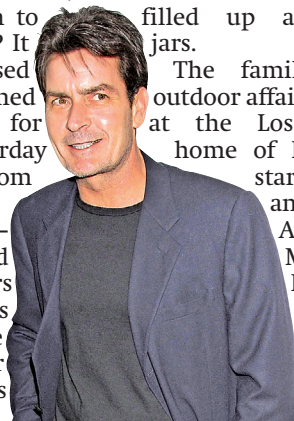
FAMILY Is Charlie Sheen hoping for a couple of slug-gers when his wife, Brooke, gives birth to twin boys in April? It would seem so based on the sports-themed baby shower held for the couple on Saturday afternoon, people.com reports.

At the party — which was attended by a variety of stars including Paris Hilton, Eric Dane and baseball star Barry Bonds — kids

decorated cupcakes with baseballs and basketballs, and blue and brown candy filled up apothecary jars.

The family-friendly outdoor affair was held at the Los Angeles home of Dr. 90210 star Dr. Nassif and his wife Adrienne Maloof-Nassif.

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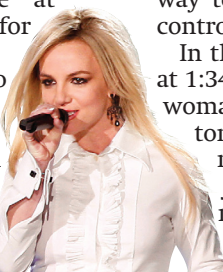
Woman caller claims to be Brit

MYSTERY A woman claiming to be Britney Spears has been calling an L.A. law firm late at night asking for representation in a bid to break free from her father's control — and some believe it's actually Spears.

E! News reports that they have heard the messages saying Britney is seeking a way to end Jamie Spears' control over her finances.

In the first message, left at 1:34 a.m. on Jan. 19, the woman says, in a hushed tone, "Hi, this is Britney Spears. I want Jon Eardley ... to represent me."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



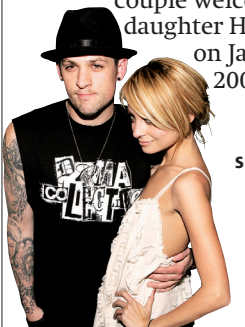
Baby No. 2 for Richie and Madden

BABY With a one-year old and a new baby on the way, Nicole Richie and Joel Madden are going to have their hands full.

In a blog posting on his band's website, the Good Charlotte frontman writes: "What's better than winning an Oscar? I am so happy to tell everyone that Harlow is going to be a big sister! God has truly blessed my family. Hope your (sic) all feeling as good as i am right now."

The happily unmarried couple welcomed daughter Harlow on Jan. 11, 2008.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Alba holds grudge against media

PEOPLE Jessica Alba is still holding a grudge against the media for ruining her wedding. "The person who helped us sign the documents told the press that day, so my parents found out from a reporter before we got to tell them," Alba tells Elle magazine.

"We were planning to take them out to dinner and tell them, but that got ruined." And, Alba says, it's part of a bigger problem: "Journalists feel entitled to do whatever it takes to get a sensational story, no matter how it affects the person involved."

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